

TRANSMITTAL OF APPEAL BRIEF (Large Entity)

AF
Docket No.
1897A1

In Re Application Of: Robert A. Sutton et al.

Application No.	Filing Date	Examiner	Customer No.	Group Art Unit	Confirmation No.
10/723,488	November 26, 2003	Michael Bernshteyn	24959	1713	9540

Invention: METHOD OF MAKING COPOLYMERS CONTAINING OLEFINIC TYPE MONOMERS



COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS:

Transmitted herewith is the Appeal Brief in this application, with respect to the Notice of Appeal filed on:
March 24, 2006

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Dated: April 17, 2006

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Marion G. Eastman
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Marion G. Eastman

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

ROBERT A. SUTTON ET AL

Serial No.: 10/723,488

Filed: NOVEMBER 26, 2003

For: METHOD OF MAKING COPOLYMERS
CONTAINING OLEFINIC TYPE
MONOMERS



: PATENT APPLICATION

: Group Art Unit: 1713

: Examiner: Michael Bernshteyn

: Confirmation No. 9540

:
: Attorney Docket No.: 1897A1

APPEAL BRIEF

MAIL STOP APPEAL BRIEF - PATENTS

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

In response to the Office Action mailed December 23, 2005, this Appeal Brief is filed in compliance with 37 CFR 41.37(c). Appellants file this Appeal Brief, in triplicate, with the Board of Appeals and Interferences based on the rejections made in the Office Action mailed December 23, 2005, in which the Examiner rejected Claims 82-121 in the captioned application. A Notice of Appeal was filed on March 24, 2006.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Appeal Brief-Patents, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.	
on <u>April 17, 2006</u>	<u>Marion G. Eastman</u>
Date	Signature
<u>Marion G. Eastman</u>	
Typed or Printed Name of Person Signing Certificate	

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REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The application has been assigned to PPG Industries Ohio, Inc., the assignment was recorded at Reel 014756/Frame 0028 on November 26, 2003.

RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no related appeals and interferences.

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 82-121 are pending. Claims 82-121 are rejected and appealed. Claims 1-81, and 122-124 have been withdrawn from consideration.

STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

An amendment subsequent to the final rejection of December 23, 2005 was mailed on January 24, 2006. The amendment was not entered.

SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

The present invention relates to a continuous process for making a copolymer composition. In the process one or more monomers such as set forth in element (b) of claim 82 as well as polymerization initiators are fed into a pressurized stirred tank reactor (STR). The monomers and initiators are retained in the STR for a time sufficient to convert the monomers to copolymer. The copolymer composition is removed from the STR at essentially the same rate as the monomers and the initiators are added. Unreacted monomers are removed from the copolymer composition and used as feed monomers. The key to the process is maintaining the liquid level in the STR such that there is substantially no air or vapor space in the reactor.

ISSUES PRESENTED

Whether Claims 82-121 are unpatentable under judicially created Doctrine of Obviousness Type Double Patenting over claims 1-48 of Coca et al (U.S. Patent

6,677,422) in view of Dankworth et al (U.S. Patent 5,650,536) and E. Bruce Nauman ("Chemical Reactor Design, Optimization, and Scaleup", McGraw-Hill, 2002).

Whether Claims 82-103 and 105-121 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the three (3) references mentioned immediately above.

Whether Claim 104 is unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the three (3) references mentioned above further in view of Jarvis et al (U.S. Patent 4,728,701).

GROUPING OF THE CLAIMS

All of the claims stand or fall together.

ARGUMENT

In determining the appropriateness of a double patenting rejection, the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,677,422 (Coca et al patent) are compared with the claims of the present invention. Also, the skill of the art as shown by the secondary references is taken into consideration.

Although the claims of the Coca et al patent relate to a process for polymerizing monomers, such as the type required by Appellants' claims, and a STR is used for the polymerization, there is no disclosure in the claims of the Coca et al patent of a continuous process for making the polymer in which the polymer is withdrawn from the STR at essentially the same rate that the monomers and initiators are introduced and any unreacted monomers are removed from the polymer and used at least as part of one of the monomers being fed to the reactor. The mere fact that the claims of Coca et al may dominate the present claims does not necessarily follow that there is double patenting.

Although the Dankworth et al patent (U.S. Patent No. 5,650,536) relates to a continuous process, the process is not for polymerizing monomers to polymers. In the Dankworth et al process a polymer is reacted with carbon monoxide and a nucleophilic trapping agent in the presence of an acid catalyst. This results in the formation of the carboxylic acid or carboxylic ester-containing polymer depending upon the choice of the nucleophilic trapping agent. There is no suggestion in Dankworth et al of a continuous

process for preparing polymers in which monomers are polymerized with one another. Rather, in Dankworth et al, a preformed polymer is reacted with carbon monoxide. Also, contrary to the position expressed in the Official Action, there is no disclosure in Dankworth et al of maintaining the liquid level in the STR such that there is substantially no air or vapor space in the reactor. The disclosure in Dankworth et al that the STR is operated in a substantial absence of air and a constant liquid level is not an indication that there is substantially no air or vapor space in the reactor. In fact, the contrary is so. One of the reactants in Dankford et al is carbon monoxide, a gas. Therefore there must be vapor space in the reactor. Evidence of this can be seen in the working examples of Dankworth et al., specifically Examples A and B which clearly indicate the presence of a vapor space in the reactor. Carbon monoxide fills the vapor space of the reactor such that there is a substantial absence of air.

Also, the E. Bruce Nauman reference does not overcome the deficiencies associated with the above two references. This reference merely discloses the benefits of a series of continuous stirred reactors. Therefore, it is requested that the double patenting rejection associated with Claims 81-121 be reversed.

With regard to the rejection of the Claims 82-103 and 105-121 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the same combination of references mentioned above, the above arguments would appear to be equally applicable. There is no disclosure in the Coca et al patent of a continuous process. Likewise, although the Dankworth et al secondary reference discloses a continuous process, the process is associated with reacting carbon monoxide with a polymer rather than polymerizing a mixture of monomers to form a polymer as required by Appellants' claims. Therefore, it is difficult to understand how one would modify Coca et al by the process of Dankworth et al to arrive at Appellants' claims. The two processes are unrelated. Further, there is no disclosure in Coca et al or Dankworth et al of conducting their processes by maintaining the liquid level in the STR, such that there is no air or vapor space in the reactor.

The Jarvis et al reference has been cited as being pertinent to Claim 104 wherein a back pressure control valve is positioned on an outlet. However, there is no teaching

in Jarvis et al to overcome the shortcomings in the three (3) references mentioned above.

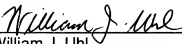
CONCLUSION

Appellants' claims for a continuous process of polymerizing monomer to polymer, do not raise a double patenting issue with Claims 1-48 of Coca et al (U.S. Patent 6,677,422). The Coca et al claims do not mention a continuous process. The secondary references of Dankworth et al (U.S. Patent 5,650,536) and E. Bruce Nauman to show the skill of the art, do not overcome the deficiency of Coca et al. The secondary references do not relate to a process for polymerizing monomer to polymer.

For many of the same reasons Appellants' claims are not obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over these references. Additionally there is no disclosure nor suggestion in any of the references of maintaining the liquid level in the STR such there is subsequently no air or vapor space in the reactor. In fact, Dankworth et al discloses the contrary.

Therefore, reversal of all the Examiner's rejections and allowance of Claims 82-121 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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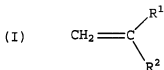
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
April 17, 2006

APPENDIX A

82. A continuous process for making a copolymer composition containing residues of at least one olefinic monomer comprising the steps of:

(a) providing at least one pressurized stirred tank reactor (STR) having at least one inlet and at least one outlet;

(b) feeding one or more monomer compositions to an STR by way of at least one of the inlets, wherein at least one monomer composition comprises one or more monomers having the following structure (I):



wherein R^1 is linear or branched C_1 to C_4 alkyl and R^2 is selected from the group consisting of methyl, linear, cyclic or branched C_1 to C_{20} alkyl, alkenyl, aryl, alkaryl and aralkyl, any of which can optionally include one or more functional groups;

(c) feeding one or more initiator compositions to the STR by way of one or more of the inlets;

(d) maintaining the liquid level in the STR such that there is substantially no air or vapor space in the reactor;

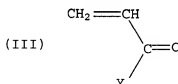
(e) maintaining the monomer compositions in (b) and the initiator compositions in (c) in the STR for a residence time sufficient to effect conversion of the monomers to a copolymer composition; and

(f) discharging the copolymer composition by way of the outlet; wherein the monomers and initiators are introduced to the STR at essentially the same rate as the copolymer is withdrawn from the STR and any unreacted monomers of structure (I) are removed from the copolymer and used as part of at least one of the monomers compositions in (b).

83. The method of claim 82, wherein at least one monomer composition in (b) comprises one or more monomers selected from the group consisting of styrene,

substituted styrenes, methyl styrene, substituted methyl styrenes, vinyl ethers and vinyl pyridine.

84. The method of claim 82, wherein at least one monomer composition in (b) comprises one or more monomers selected from the group consisting of acrylonitrile and acrylic monomers described by structure (III):



wherein Y is selected from the group consisting of $-\text{NR}^3_2$, $-\text{O-R}^5-\text{O}-\text{C}(=\text{O})-\text{NR}^3_2$, and $-\text{OR}^4$; R^3 is selected from the group consisting of H, linear or branched C_1 to C_{20} alkyl and linear or branched C_1 to C_{20} alkylol; R^4 is selected from the group consisting of H, poly(ethylene oxide), poly(propylene oxide), linear or branched C_1 to C_{20} alkyl, alkylol, aryl, alkaryl and aralkyl, linear or branched C_1 to C_{20} fluoroalkyl, fluoroaryl and fluoroaralkyl, a siloxane, a polysiloxane, an alkyl siloxane, an ethoxylated trimethylsilyl siloxane and a propoxylated trimethylsilyl siloxane; R^5 is a divalent linear or branched C_1 to C_{20} alkyl linking group; and R^3 and/or R^4 optionally include one or more functional groups.

85. The method of claim 82, wherein the monomer of structure (I) is selected from the group consisting of isobutylene, diisobutylene, dipentene, isoprenol, and mixtures thereof.

86. The method of claim 82, wherein the group R^2 of the monomer of structure (I) includes one or more functional groups selected from the group consisting of epoxy, carboxylic acid, hydroxy, amide, oxazoline, acetoacetate, isocyanate, carbamate, amine, amine salt, quaternized amine, thiol, methylol, methylol ether, and sulfonium salt.

87. The method of claim 84, wherein Y includes at least one functional group of one or more selected from the group consisting of epoxy, carboxylic acid, hydroxy, amide, oxazoline, acetoacetate, isocyanate, carbamate, amine, amine salt, quaternized amine, thiol, methylol, methylol ether, and sulfonium salt.

88. The method of claim 82, wherein the resulting copolymer composition is reacted such that one or more functional groups are incorporated into the copolymer.

89. The method of claim 88, wherein the functional groups incorporated into the copolymer are one or more selected from the group consisting of epoxy, carboxylic acid, hydroxy, amide, oxazoline, acetoacetate, isocyanate, carbamate, amine, amine salt, quaternized amine, thiol, methylol, methylol ether, and sulfonium salt.

90. The method of claim 82, wherein the initiator composition comprises a thermal free radical initiator.

91. The method of claim 90, wherein the thermal free radical initiator is selected from the group consisting of a peroxide compound, an azo compound, a persulfate compound, and mixtures thereof.

92. The method of claim 91, wherein the peroxide compound is one or more selected from the group consisting of hydrogen peroxide, methyl ethyl ketone peroxides, benzoyl peroxides, di-t-butyl peroxides, di-t-amyl peroxides, dicumyl peroxides, diacyl peroxides, decanoyl peroxide, lauroyl peroxide, peroxydicarbonates, peroxyesters, dialkyl peroxides, hydroperoxides, and peroxyketals.

93. The method of claim 91, wherein the azo compound is one or more selected from the group consisting of 4-4'-azobis(4-cyanovaleric acid), 1-1'-azobiscyclohexanecarbonitrile, 2-2'-azobisisobutyronitrile, 2-2'-azobis(2-methylpropionamide) dihydrochloride, 2-2'-azobis(2-methylbutyronitrile), 2-2'-

azobis(propionitrile), 2-2'-azobis(2,4-dimethylvaleronitrile), 2-2'-azobis(valeronitrile), 2,2'-azobis[2-methyl-N-(2-hydroxyethyl)propionamide], 4,4'-azobis(4-cyanopentanoic acid), 2,2'-azobis(N,N'-dimethyleneisobutyramidine), 2,2'-azobis(2-amidinopropane) dihydrochloride, 2,2'-azobis(N,N'-dimethyleneisobutyramidine) dihydrochloride, and 2-(carbamoylazo)-isobutyronitrile.

94. The method of claim 82, wherein any of the monomer compositions contain one or more of the monomers selected from the group consisting of hydroxyethyl acrylate, hydroxypropyl acrylate, acrylic acid, methyl acrylate, ethyl acrylate, butyl acrylate, isobutyl acrylate, isobornyl acrylate, dimethylaminoethyl acrylate, acrylamide, chlorotrifluoroethylene, glycidyl acrylate, 2-ethylhexyl acrylate and n-butoxy methyl acrylamide.

95. The method of claim 82, wherein after discharging the copolymer composition in (f), the copolymer composition is fed to a flash tank.

96. The method of claim 95, wherein unreacted monomer of structure (I) is substantially recovered from the resulting copolymer composition by applying a vacuum to the flash tank.

97. The method of claim 95, wherein the copolymer composition is discharged from the flash tank.

98. The method of claim 82, wherein after discharging the copolymer composition in (f), the copolymer composition is mixed with a solvent.

99. The method of claim 96, wherein the recovered unreacted monomer of structure (I) comprises a portion of the monomer composition in (b).

100. The method of claim 82, wherein the residence time in the STR in (e) is from 5 minutes to six hours.

101. The method of claim 82, wherein the residence time in the STR in (e) is a period of time sufficient to incorporate at least 75 mole % of the monomers of structure (I) into the copolymer composition.

102. The method of claim 82, wherein mixing is applied by the STR in (e).

103. The method of claim 82, wherein no mixing is applied in (e).

104. The method of claim 82, wherein a back pressure control valve is positioned on the outlet.

105. The method of claim 82, wherein the pressure in the STR is maintained at a pressure above the vapor pressure of any monomer in any of the monomer compositions in (b).

106. The method of claim 82, wherein the pressure in the STR is from 300 to 1,000 psi.

107. The method of claim 82, wherein the monomer compositions in (b) and the initiator compositions in (c) are fed to the STR by way of high pressure pumps.

108. The method of claim 82, wherein the monomer compositions in (b) and the initiator compositions in (c) are mixed prior to being fed to the STR.

109. The method of claim 82, wherein the inlets empty into a bottom portion of the STR.

110. The method of claim 108, wherein the monomer compositions in (b) and the initiator compositions in (c) are mixed using a static mixer.

111. The method of claim 82, wherein the temperature in the reactor is maintained at a temperature of from 50°C to 300°C.

112. The method of claim 82, wherein after discharging the copolymer composition in (f), the copolymer composition is fed to a second STR.

113. The method of claim 112, wherein the copolymer composition is fed from the second STR to a third STR and discharged therefrom.

114. The method of claim 112, wherein the copolymer composition is discharged from the second STR to a flash tank.

115. The method of claim 113, wherein the copolymer composition is discharged from the third STR to a flash tank.

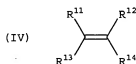
116. The method of claim 82, wherein after discharging the copolymer composition in (f), the copolymer composition is fed to a wipe film evaporator.

117. The method of claim 116, wherein the copolymer composition is discharged from the wipe film evaporator to a flaker to provide the copolymer composition in dry form.

118. The method of claim 82, wherein the monomer compositions in (b) comprise greater than 50 mole %, based on the total number of moles of monomer in the monomer compositions of the monomers of structure (I).

119. The method of claim 118, wherein the amount of the monomers in structure (I) do not exceed 55 mole %.

120. The method of claim 82, wherein one or more of the monomer compositions in (b) include one or more residues derived from other ethylenically unsaturated monomers of general structure (IV):



wherein R¹¹, R¹² and R¹⁴ are independently selected from the group consisting of H, CF₃, straight or branched alkyl of 1 to 20 carbon atoms, aryl, unsaturated straight or branched alkenyl or alkynyl of 2 to 10 carbon atoms, unsaturated straight or branched alkenyl of 2 to 6 carbon atoms substituted with a halogen, C₃-C₈ cycloalkyl, heterocyclyl and phenyl; R¹³ is selected from the group consisting of H, C₁-C₆ alkyl, COOR¹⁵, wherein R¹⁵ is selected from the group consisting of H, an alkali metal, a C₁ to C₆ alkyl group, glycidyl and aryl, which can optionally include one or more functional groups.

121. The method of claim 120, wherein the other ethylenically unsaturated monomers are one or more selected from the group consisting of methacrylic monomers and allylic monomers.